

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARTNERING CONFERENCE  
“PORTS AND WATERWAYS:  
MAINTAINING COMPETITIVENESS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY”  
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05 JUNE 1998

GOOD MORNING. GENERAL ANDERSON, DR. WESTPHAL,  
MEMBERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION,  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. ITS A  
DISTINCT PLEASURE AND HONOR TO BE ONE OF YOUR  
SPEAKERS TODAY AND A PART OF THIS PARTNERING  
CONFERENCE: “VOICES OF THE RIVER”.

MY THANKS TO GENERAL ANDERSON FOR THE OPPORTUNITY  
AND THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO ALL OF YOUR FOR  
PARTICIPATING.

THE COAST GUARD HAS BEEN AND REMAINS A PARTNER IN  
WESTERN RIVER MARITIME OPERATIONS WITH THE  
DIVERSE GROUP OF INTERESTS REPRESENTED HERE AND  
LOOKS FORWARD TO WORKING TOGETHER ON THOSE  
ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS.

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH MARITIME OPERATIONS ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER GOES BACK TO THE MID 1970'S WHEN I WAS THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF MARINE SAFETY OFFICE PADUCAH, KY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CG OPERATIONS ON ABOUT 400 MILES OF VARIOUS RIVERS INCLUDING PARTS OF THE UPPER AND LOWER MISSISSIPPI. IN ADDITION, I WAS THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THEN COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE MARINE INSPECTION OFFICE IN NEW ORLEANS, LA IN THE EARLY 1980'S.

MORE RECENTLY I SERVED AS COMMANDER OF THE EIGHTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT, HEADQUARTERED IN NEW ORLEANS.

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES ARE WITHIN THE EIGHTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT; AND THERE IS A DIRECTOR, WESTERN RIVERS OPERATIONS HERE IN ST LOUIS AS WELL AS A MARINE SAFETY OFFICE.

MR. LOCKWOOD PROVIDED GREAT IMAGES OF THE BALANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL, RECREATION AND COMMERCIAL USES FOR US TO KEEP IN MIND.

THERE IS A MIX OF COAST GUARD VESSELS, AND SHORE UNITS THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN RIVER SYSTEM THAT DO TWO PRINCIPLE THINGS: FIRST, PREVENTION ACTIVITIES TO HELP ENSURE THAT MARITIME OPERATIONS ARE SAFE, ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND EFFICIENT; AND SECOND, RESPONSE OPERATIONS WHEN PREVENTION FAILS AND PROBLEMS OCCUR.

PREVENTION OPERATIONS INVOLVE THE MAINTENANCE OF THE AIDS TO NAVIGATION SYSTEM, PROVISION OF VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICES, INSPECTION OF FACILITIES AND BARGES THAT CARRY OIL AND HAZARDOUS CARGOES, AND MONITORING THE MOVEMENT AND HANDLING OF THOSE CARGOES.

RESPONSE OCCURS WHEN THERE IS AN OIL SPILL, NEED FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE, OR EMERGENCY TRAFFIC CONTROL, VESSEL COLLISION, GROUNDING, OR OTHER ACCIDENT THAT IMPACTS RIVER TRAFFIC OR THE ENVIRONMENT. AND, OF COURSE, WE CONDUCT FLOOD RELIEF OPERATIONS WHEN NECESSARY.

ALL OF THOSE THINGS INVOLVE WORKING WITH THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS, EPA, FEMA, VARIOUS STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, VARIOUS INDUSTRY AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS – AND WE COULDN'T DO OUR JOB IF WE DIDN'T PARTNER.

SO, THIS EVENT, THE COMMENTS OF THE SPEAKERS AND THE DIALOG THAT WILL OCCUR IN THE PANEL SESSIONS, ARE OF GREAT INTEREST TO US; AND, I SEE A GREAT INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PANEL ISSUES, ESPECIALLY WITH THE CONCEPT OF PARTNERING AND TEAMING AND THE ROLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION WHICH HAS SERVED SO WELL FOR 119 YEARS.

WHILE PARTNERING IS NOT NEW, THE FOCUS ON THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS IS ESSENTIAL IF WE ARE TO EXPECT TO MOVE TOGETHER TOWARD ATTAINING ANY COMMON VISION FOR “MISSISSIPPI RIVER 2030”.

AS A MEMBER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, THE  
COAST GUARD VIEWS THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER SYSTEM AS A  
VITAL COMPONENT OF THE MARINE MODE OF A NATIONAL  
INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CRITICAL TO  
OUR ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AND NATIONAL SECURITY.

AND WE ARE GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE  
VIABILITY OF THE RIVER AS A VITAL COMPONENT OF  
THAT NATIONAL INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

SO, THIS MORNING, I'M GOING TO DESCRIBE THOSE CONCERNS  
TO YOU, TELL YOU WHY WE HAD REGIONAL LISTENING  
SESSIONS AND SOME INITIATIVES TO DEAL WITH THOSE  
CONCERNS, PROVIDE SOME THOUGHTS AS TO WHAT ELSE  
MIGHT BE DONE, AND POSE A FEW QUESTIONS THAT  
MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO THE PANELS.

MY COMMENTS REVOLVE AROUND A CONCEPT THAT WE CALL  
WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT THAT I BELIEVE BLENDS IN  
THE PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF THIS CONFERENCE

WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT CAN BE DEFINED AS:

“THE INTEGRATED EFFORTS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
RESOURCES TO ENSURE THAT INFRASTRUCTURE, SYSTEMS  
AND SERVICES OF OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS MEET

THE DEMAND FOR A SAFE, SECURE, EFFICIENT,  
ACCESSIBLE, ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AND  
ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND COMPONENT OF THE  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.”

A LOT OF WORDS, BUT, OF ALL THOSE WORDS, I STRESS THE  
CONCEPT OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCES AND  
EFFORTS IN A PARTNERSHIP.

THE U.S. IS AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE, A FORK IN THE ROAD  
PERHAPS, WITH RESPECT TO THE FUTURE OF PORTS AND  
WATERWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE.

MANY OF OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS IN THE U.S. ARE NO  
LONGER UP TO WORLD CLASS STANDARDS. INSTEAD,  
THEY MAY BE REDUCING U.S. COMPETITIVENESS AND  
INCREASING RISKS TO SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

THE UNITED STATES IS THE WORLD’S LARGEST CONSUMER  
NATION. WITH NINE MILLION BARRELS OF OIL IMPORTED  
DAILY, AND NEARLY ALL OF THIS IS SHIPPED BY WATER.  
EXCLUDING MEXICO AND CANADA, 95% OF OUR FOREIGN  
TRADE AND 25% OF OUR DOMESTIC TRADE DEPENDS ON  
MARITIME TRANSPORTATION.

OUR MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITATES OUR GLOBAL OUTREACH INTO OVERSEAS MARKETS AND OUR INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD AFFAIRS, INCLUDING THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS.

MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE RANGES FROM THE COASTAL ZONE, THROUGH OUR INLAND WATERWAYS, INCLUDING THE WESTERN RIVERS OF OUR HEARTLAND, AND ACROSS BERTHS, WHARVES, LOADING CELLS AND PIERS TO INTERMODAL INTERFACE WITH RAILROADS, HIGHWAYS AND THE LIKE. IT INCLUDES THE NATURAL AND MAINTAINED CHANNELS AND ANCHORAGES, AIDS TO NAVIGATION, CHARTING, AND BRIDGES – ALL THOSE THINGS THAT PROMOTE OR ALLOW A SAFE PASSAGE.

IT'S A SYSTEM OF PORTS AND WATERWAYS AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS – INLAND AND COASTAL.

AND IF ANY PART OF THAT SYSTEM DOESN'T FUNCTION WELL THE WHOLE SYSTEM SUFFERS. COASTAL PORTS THAT ENGAGE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE DEPEND ON THE EFFICIENCY OF INLAND WATERWAYS – MISSISSIPPI RIVER INCLUDED.

OUR MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE IS UNDER STRESS AND THE STRESS IS INCREASING.

NOW LET'S CONSIDER SOME TRENDS AND CONCERNS AS WE  
MOVE INTO THE NEXT CENTURY:

- INCREASED TRAFFIC ON OUR WATERWAYS OF ALL TYPES;  
WORLD MARITIME TRADE IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE  
SIGNIFICANTLY (TWO TO THREE TIMES) BY THE YEAR 2020.  
WILL OUR NATION'S PORTS AND WATERWAYS BE ABLE TO  
CARRY THE LOAD IN A SAFE AND EFFICIENT MANNER?
- PROJECTED INCREASE IN THE USE OF PASSENGER VESSELS,  
ESPECIALLY FERRIES. AT THE SAME TIME COMMERCIAL  
CARGO TRAFFIC IS EXPANDING, RECREATIONAL AND  
LEISURE USE IS GROWING, AND AN INCREASING NUMBER  
OF COMMUTERS ARE LOOKING TO HIGH SPEED FERRIES.  
CAN WE ACCOMODATE ALL OF THESE USERS BY  
CONDUCTING BUSINESS AS USUAL?
- INCREASED CONCERN BY THE PUBLIC OVER SAFETY AND  
THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH CAN'T BE IGNORED.



- OUR WATERWAYS ARE CURRENTLY MANAGED BY A HOST OF FEDERAL AGENCIES - USCG, USACE, MARAD, NOAA, EPA, SLSDC. HOW WELL COORDINATED ARE THOSE EFFORTS? DO WE NEED A MORE COORDINATED AND SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO HOW WE MANAGE THE NATION'S PORTS AND WATERWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE?

IN SHORT,

- MANY OF OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS ARE MARGINAL IN THERE ABILITY TO HANDLE TODAY'S TRAFFIC VOLUME;
- THERE IS INCREASING COMPETITION FOR AVAILABLE WATERWAYS SPACE; AND
- THERE ARE MULTIPLE AGENCY JURISDICTION INVOLVED - FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL - AND MANY STAKEHOLDERS.
- WHAT WILL BE REQUIRED TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF A COMPETITIVE GLOBAL MARKET AND TO MAINTAIN SAFETY IN VIEW OF THE GROWING DEMANDS UPON OUR NATION'S WATERWAYS?

LEFT ON OUR CURRENT COURSE, THERE IS TREMENDOUS  
POTENTIAL FOR PORTS AND WATERWAYS TO BECOME  
BOTTLENECKS IN THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION  
SYSTEM WITH INCREASINGLY HIGHER RISK TO MARITIME  
SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

ARE WE REALLY AT A FORK IN THE ROAD, A DECISION POINT,  
WHERE OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS ARE CONCERNED?

IN ALICE AND WONDERLAND IT WAS SAID WHEN ALICE CAME  
TO A FORK IN THE ROAD THAT IF YOU DON'T KNOW  
WHERE YOU'RE GOING, ANY ROAD WILL DO.

MUCH LIKE PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S VISION FOR THE  
INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM, THE NATION SHOULD  
PURSUE A VISION FOR MARINE TRANSPORTATION TO  
MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY.

THAT VISION MUST GUIDE US TO RIGHT CHOICES – THE RIGHT  
ROAD IF YOU WILL – TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS.

SO, WHAT SHOULD WE DO AND WHAT IS BEING DONE?

WE MUST DEVELOP STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS ON A VISION  
AND A SYSTEMATIC PROCESS FOR A COORDINATED  
EFFORT AT THE LOCAL PORTS AND WATERWAYS LEVEL,  
THAT INCLUDES ALL OF THE STAKEHOLDERS - FEDERAL,  
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT; PORTS AND  
WATERWAYS USERS; PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS;  
ENVIRONMENTALISTS; ETC. STAKEHOLDERS WILL BE  
INVOLVED EITHER UP FRONT OR IN THE COURTS!

THAT SYSTEMATIC PROCESS IS NEEDED TO:

- IDENTIFY THE IMPROVEMENTS IN MARITIME  
INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED TO GIVE ANY PORT OR  
WATERWAYS SYSTEM THE ABILITY TO REACH  
TOWARD WORLD CLASS STATUS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup>  
CENTURY;
- PRIORITIZE THOSE IMPROVEMENTS;
- IDENTIFY FUNDING ALTERNATIVES - PUBLIC AND  
PRIVATE; AND,
- DEVELOP A PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE VISION.

FROM A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE, THIS CONFERENCE IS A  
STRONG ADVANCE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE, THE COAST GUARD AND THE MARITIME ADMINISTRATION ARE WORKING ALONG THOSE LINES WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT, WHICH I CHAIR. IT INCLUDES THE US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, EPA, NOAA, NIMA, MMS AND OTHERS, IN ADDITION TO THE COAST GUARD AND MARAD.

GOVERNMENT DOESN'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS AND GOVERNMENT ALONE DOESN'T KNOW BEST. GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, DOES HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD, COORDINATE, FACILITATE, AND STAY OUT OF THE WAY WHEN APPROPRIATE TO MAKE THINGS BETTER—TO HELP PORTS AND WATERWAYS REACH THEIR VISION FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY - THAT'S HAPPENING HERE TODAY.

IN NOVEMBER 1997, WE BRIEFED TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY SLATER ON OUR WORK, GAINED HIS INTEREST AND SUPPORT, AND BRANCHED OUT IN THE SPIRIT OF "ONE DOT" TO INCLUDE THE FEDERAL RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION (FRA), THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA), THE SAINT LAWRENCE SEAWAY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (SLSDC) AND THE RESEARCH AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION (RSPA) IN OUR EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE INTERMODAL CONNECTION WITH PORTS AND WATERWAYS.

SECRETARY SLATER AGREED THAT WWM - THE FUTURE OF OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS - MUST BE PUT ON THE NATIONAL AGENDA TO OPTIMIZE INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND OBTAIN FULL STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT TOWARD DEFINING A VISION AND DETERMINING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ATTAIN THAT VISION.

SO IN THAT SPIRIT, BUT MORE SO IN THE SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP, OUR NEXT STEP INVOLVED OUTREACH TO STAKEHOLDER GROUPS. PRIOR TO THAT OUR EFFORTS WERE ONLY HALF THE JOB -- ONLY THE GOVERNMENT VIEW.

WE NEEDED DIRECT STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT ... TO ENSURE A CORRECT APPROACH; TO REALLY DETERMINE THE STATUS OF PORTS AND WATERWAYS TODAY; TO DETERMINE THE NEEDS FOR THE NEXT CENTURY; AND TO DETERMINE WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO MEET THOSE NEEDS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL—THIS IS NOT A WASHINGTON SOLUTION.

OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS THE COAST GUARD AND MARAD JOINTLY LED SEVEN TWO-DAY REGIONAL LISTENING SESSIONS ON OUR NATION’S MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM – WATERWAYS, PORTS AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS. REGIONAL MEANS THE NORTHEAST, SOUTHEAST, GULF, RIVERS, GREAT LAKES, NORTHWEST AND SOUTHWEST.

TRAVELING TO NEW ORLEANS, OAKLAND CALIFORNIA, NEW YORK, CLEVELAND, ST. LOUIS, CHARLESTON, AND PORTLAND OREGON, WE LED A COALITION OF FEDERAL AGENCIES INCLUDING: THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, NOAA, FHWA, FRA, NIMA, CUSTOMS, AND EPA–“ONE DOT PLUS”.

I WAS ABLE TO PERSONALLY PARTICIPATE IN FOUR OF THESE SESSIONS, INCLUDING ST. LOUIS AND NEW ORLEANS – AND I KNOW SOME OF YOU WERE THERE TOO. I GAINED VALUABLE INSIGHT LISTENING TO THE STAKEHOLDERS AS THEY EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS ON THE NATION’S WATERWAYS, PORTS, AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS.

I WOULD LIKE TO ADD WE HAD GREAT SUPPORT IN NEW ORLEANS FROM THE PORT AND IN ST. LOUIS FROM MARC 2000.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE SESSIONS WAS AN OPEN FORUM FOR PUBLIC COMMENT. AS A PANEL, WE LISTENED TO STAKEHOLDER VIEWS REGARDING THOSE THINGS THAT MUST BE DONE TO ENSURE THAT U.S. WATERWAYS, PORTS AND THEIR INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS ARE ABLE TO SUPPORT THE LEVEL AND TYPES OF TRAFFIC EXPECTED IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY IN A SAFE, ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND EFFICIENT MANNER.

THE SECOND DAY OF EACH SESSION CONSISTED OF FOCUS GROUP WORK BY REPRESENTATIVES OF A CROSS-SECTION OF REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM. THE GOAL WAS TO DEFINE THE PRESENT STATE AND THE DESIRED FUTURE STATE OF THE SYSTEM IN THREE AREAS – INFRASTRUCTURE, POLICY, AND MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS - IDENTIFYING THE MOST IMPORTANT THEMES, AND DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACHIEVING THAT FUTURE STATE.

ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE ISSUES RAISED HERE IN ST. LOUIS SEEMED REGIONAL IN NATURE, SUCH AS IMPROVMENT OF NAVIGATIONAL STRUCTURES (LOCKS AND DAMS), WE'VE FOUND THAT OFTEN WHAT APPEARED TO BE REGIONAL ISSUES ARE REALLY NATIONAL ISSUES AS WELL – REGIONS ARE INTERDEPENDENT.

FOR EXAMPLE, VIABILITY OF LOCKS AND DAMS VITAL TO WESTERN RIVER COMMERCE CAN IMPACT MOVEMENT OF CARGO, SUCH AS GRAIN, TO NEW ORLEANS AND ACROSS THE INTERCOASTAL WATERWAY TO OTHER PORTS FOR EXPORT.

THE POTENTIAL FOR THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES AS A TRANSPORTATION MODE FOR CONTAINERS WAS ALSO EXPLORED AND DISCUSSED AT LENGTH. THAT WOULD KIND OF BE THE OPPOSITE OF THE LOCK AND DAM EXAMPLE WITH FINISHED IMPORTED GOODS FLOWING FROM COASTAL PORTS TO THE HEARTLAND. MARINE TRANSPORTATION IS A VERY ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTALLY CLEAN TRANSPORT MODE FOR DISTRIBUTION THROUGH RAIL AND TRUCK INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS IF AND WHERE AVAILABLE.

WE COMPLETED THE LISTENING SESSIONS TWO WEEKS AGO.

RECURRING THEMES/ISSUES DEVELOPED FROM REGION TO REGION INCLUDING ST. LOUIS AND NEW ORLEANS:

- FIRST, A NEED TO CREATE A NATIONAL MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (MTS) VISION



- CREATION OF REGIONAL FEDERAL AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS AND HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEES TO BETTER COORDINATE FEDERAL ACTIVITY AND INTERFACE W/ STAKEHOLDERS
- IMPROVE OPERATIONS COMMUNICATIONS
- DREDGING – A NEED FOR POLICY, STREAMLINED FEDERAL/STATE PERMIT PROCESS, AND DISPOSAL
- FUNDING OVERALL – FOR AGENCIES, FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS, FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT INCENTIVES, HMT REPLACEMENT
- CABINET LEVEL MTS CHAMPION
- INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF MTS
- EDUCATE DECISION MAKERS THAT MTS IS A VITAL COMPONENT OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
- INCREASE PARTNERSHIP GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING
- ONE-STOP SHOPPING – STREAMLINED PORT ENTRY PROCESS

THAT’S JUST A SAMPLING OF THEMES AND ISSUES DEVELOPED.

STAKEHOLDERS SAW THE FUTURE PROSPERITY AND WELL-BEING OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONS OR CONSTITUENTS AS INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO OUR LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL EFFORTS TO DEVELOP SOLUTIONS. SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF UPGRADING AMERICA'S AGING MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE, AND REDUCING IMPEDIMENTS TO THE EFFICIENT FUNCTION OF OUR MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

WITHOUT NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS TO PORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUNCTION, THEY SEE U.S. COMPETITIVENESS IN GLOBAL MARKETS DECLINING – AND THAT IS HAPPENING NOW! AND THE WORLD IS NOT STANDING IDLY BY WHILE THE UNITED STATES WORKS TO FIND ITS WAY.

THIS FALL, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY SLATER WILL BE HOSTING A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE U.S. MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BASED ON THE ISSUES DEVELOPED THROUGH THE REGIONAL LISTENING SESSION PROCESS.

SECRETARY SLATER AND OTHER AGENCY SENIOR EXECUTIVES, TOGETHER WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY, AND INTEREST GROUPS - INCLUDING SOME OF THE REGIONAL LISTENING SESSION PARTICIPANTS - WILL WORK TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN OUR REGIONAL LISTENING SESSIONS AND BEGIN DEVELOPING A NATIONAL WWM POLICY AND AGENDA FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY.

AN AGENDA TO BE WORKED PRIMARILY AT THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL WITH NATIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT AND COORDINATION AS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A UNIFORM, SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO ENSURE WATERWAYS, PORTS, AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS SUPPORT 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TRAFFIC IN A SAFE, ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND, AND EFFICIENT WAY.

I BEGAN MY COMMENTS BY TELLING YOU OF CONCERNS ABOUT THE ABILITY OF OUR MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE LEVELS OF TRAFFIC EXPECTED IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AND WHY WE SHOULD BE SO CONCERNED. I THEN DESCRIBED EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A SYSTEMATIC PROCESS TO MEET A VISION FOR WATERWAYS, PORTS AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS.

THIS PARTNERING CONFERENCE IS FOCUSED ON THE  
MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI  
RIVER AS A WATER RESOURCE FOR ALL USERS. THAT  
ALONE IS OF GREAT VALUE.

BUT FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, THIS CONFERENCE IS OF EVEN  
MORE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE. BY WORKING TO  
PRESERVE, PROMOTE AND IMPROVE THE MISSISSIPPI  
RIVER, WE ARE ALSO PRESERVING, PROMOTING AND  
IMPROVING THE NATIONAL INTERMODAL  
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM – VITAL TO THE MAINTENANCE  
OF THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE U.S. IN THE GLOBAL  
MARKET OF TODAY AND THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY – AND  
ULTIMATELY VITAL TO OUR OVERALL ECONOMIC WELL-  
BEING AND NATIONAL SECURITY.

SO, THE RESULTS OF THIS CONFERENCE WILL BE OF ENORMOUS  
BENEFIT HERE IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY AS WELL AS AT  
THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

PLEASE TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO  
PARTNER AND VISION INTO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY.